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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

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MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Cast Upon Hashem Your Burden and He Will Sustain You

"When you shall enter the Land that I give you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring an Omer from your first harvest to the Kohen"
(Vayikra 23:10)

The Torah commands us to bring an Omer from the first harvest to the Kohen, following which we must begin counting seven weeks, which are the fifty days until the festival of Shavuot, the Giving of the Torah. Our Sages ask: Why does Hashem command us to bring this Omer offering to the Kohen? And why do we have to count fifty days from Pesach until Shavuot? Seemingly, Hashem could have commanded Bnei Yisrael to celebrate Shavuot on the sixth of Sivan, even without counting the preceding fifty days.

The answer could be that the reason why Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Egypt was for the sake of receiving the Torah and inheriting the Land, where they could fulfil the mitzvot dependent on the Land and build the Beit Hamikdash. Hashem knew that Am Yisrael would start wondering, "What will be with our livelihood?" For if they dedicate their days to Torah study and mitzvah observance, how will they provide for their needs?

Therefore, Hashem commanded Bnei Yisrael that immediately upon entering the Land they should bring an Omer of the first harvest to the Kohen, so as to reinforce the idea that it is not their strength or might that brings them wealth, rather Hashem in His goodness and kindness is the One who sustains and provides for man, in accordance with his deeds (Alshich Vayikra 23:9-10). If Bnei Yisrael follow the path of Torah and mitzvot, Hashem will lavishly provide for their needs, without them needing to exert themselves or labor for it. However, it is impossible to supply man's sustenance without any effort on his part, for Adam Harishon and all mankind were cursed with "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread". But, there is sweat and there is sweat, and one who is particular to follow in the path of Hashem will not have to trouble himself excessively.

This is what lies behind the Omer offering; it served to instill in Bnei Yisrael the message that their sustenance is not dependent on their toil alone, rather Hashem is the One who provides for and sustains every living creature, from the horns of the re'em (a large animal) to the eggs of lice. He is the One who will provide for their livelihood, if they obey His voice and cleave to His Torah.

Immediately after Bnei Yisrael bring this offering to the Kohen, they begin counting the Omer out of anticipation for the Giving of the Torah. This proves

the dedication of all their vigor and intent for the Torah alone, with the knowledge that it is only Torah that endows man with goodness and blessing. This can be compared to a young man who eagerly awaits his wedding day and so counts the days that remain until he will wed his bride. The more the days pass and the longed-awaited day approaches, the more his excitement and joy escalates. Similarly, Bnei Yisrael were commanded to count the Omer in anticipation of Matan Torah, to thereby prove their great desire to receive the Torah, since it is this alone that endows them with life and opens the storehouses of Heaven to shower them with abundant blessings and goodness.

Chazal relate (Shemot Rabba 52:3) the following incident: "A talmid of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai left Eretz Yisrael and returned wealthy. The other students saw this and were jealous; they too wished to go to Chutz La'aretz. Rabbi Shimon became aware of this so he took them to the Pagei Madon valley and prayed, 'Valley, valley, fill up with golden dinars'. It began filling up with golden dinars. He said to them, 'If you are asking for gold, here is gold – take it! But know that anyone who takes now is taking from his portion in the World to Come, since the reward for Torah is reserved for the World to Come, as it says, 'She joyfully awaits the last day'."

When his students heard this, they understood their master's hidden rebuke and through being strengthened with the knowledge of the great reward that awaits those who follow in the correct path, they discarded all the treasures they had collected, while repeating to themselves that true wealth and happiness awaits them in the Next World.

According to Rabbi Shimon, the entire world stands on Torah alone, therefore he saw no reason for man to go out and toil for his livelihood. He firmly believed that Hashem would take care of the livelihood of one who studies Torah and toils in Avodat Hashem (Berachot 35b).

Today, we are extremely far from the lofty level of Rabbi Shimon who was entirely holy for Hashem. However, even just contemplating his sublime stature has the power to strengthen our faith and make us realize that "Man's sustenance is determined for him from the beginning of the year to year's end", by the Master of all who examines our deeds and delivers His ruling accordingly. This is the meaning of the verse (Tehillim 55:23), "Cast upon Hashem your burden and He will sustain you", for through placing your trust in the Creator that He will take care of your livelihood, you will merit "He will sustain you".

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Hilula

19 - Rabbi Ezra Attia, Rosh Yeshiva 'Porat Yosef'

20 - Rabbi Yosef Velatoch

21 - Rabbi Reuven Pinto, Rav in Marrakesh

22 - Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri, the Saba Kadisha

23 - Rabbi Shmuel Florentine, Rav of Salonika

24 - Rabbi Baruch ben Chaim, Rav of 'Sha'arei Tzion'

25 - Rabbi Chaim Churi, Av Beit Din of Guavas



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Resolute in Her Decision

A woman once called me up to say that her newborn was having trouble breathing and was in critical condition. She requested my blessing for his complete recovery.

In order for my blessing to take effect, I asked the woman to undertake the mitzvah of dressing modestly, like all good Jewish daughters. B'ezrat Hashem, in the merit of my holy ancestors, her son would recuperate from his respiratory condition. The woman did as I asked and her baby's condition improved.

However, after some time his situation deteriorated. The mother phoned me again, in a fury. "If the child dies, G-d forbid, I will revoke my commitment to dress modestly!"

I was very pained at her words and told her, "In Tehillim (24:3) we read, 'Who may ascend the mountain of Hashem, and who may stand in the place of His sanctity?' In this world, there are two types of tests. There are challenges sent by Hashem in order to awaken a person to repent for his sins. These are referred to as 'who may ascend the mountain of Hashem.' And there are others which are sent to test one's level of faith and devotion toward his Maker. These are called, 'who may stand in the place of His sanctity.' It is certainly difficult to ascend in levels of spirituality, but it is many times harder to retain the holy level one has achieved.

"You faced the first type of challenge at your son's birth. You faced it admirably, accepting upon yourself to be more stringent with modesty. Now Hashem is testing you with a different type of challenge. He wants to examine if you are consistent in your resolution, or if it was just a passing whim, undertaken temporarily for your son's recovery.

"B'ezrat Hashem, when you show determination to unconditionally uphold your pledge, despite the Yetzer Hara seducing you to stop, you will merit the recovery of your young son."

Baruch Hashem, this woman courageously withstood her trial and even further strengthened her fear of G-d. She merited seeing salvation and her son recovered completely.

The Haftarah

"But the Kohanim, the Levites, descendants of Tzadok" (Yechezkel 44)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah mentions the laws pertaining to the holiness of the Kohanim, according to the instructions of Yechezkel HaNavi. The Parsha too discusses the holy conduct required of Ahron HaKohen's offspring.

Guard Your Tongue

Examine the Source Carefully

Even if one personally witnessed inappropriate behavior, the deed must not be hastily judged. That is, one never really knows all the motivations and other details behind the scenes, and similarly, in the case of an argument, we cannot usually accurately determine which of the sides involved is correct. One must carefully examine all the facts before coming to the conclusion that one has a clear understanding of the situation. And even then... More than anything, it is important to be familiar with all the laws concerning this prohibition, before deciding that the seemingly 'guilty' party has indeed transgressed.



In Our Father's Path

How Do We Observe the Mitzvot?

We may wonder why we define ourselves as 'Torah observant Jews'. What exactly are we trying to observe? A careful look in the Holy Torah reveals that the term 'observe' is mentioned several times, an example of which we find in this week's Parsha: "You shall observe My commandments and perform them" (Vayikra 22:31). So what exactly is this 'observing' that the Torah commands us and how do we carry it out?

Rabbi Reuven Karlenstein zt"l addresses this topic in his sefer 'Yeichi Reuven'. He writes that in fact, it is possible to interpret the words "You shall observe My commandments", according to its simple meaning: an expression of guarding. We are being commanded to guard the mitzvot and protect them so that they should not become spoiled; to preserve the quality of the mitzvot. If a person does not pay attention and performs a mitzvah without heart, joy or thought, it does not have much value.

He quotes a beautiful explanation in the name of Rabbi Shalom Schwadron zt"l, on the verse, "You shall safeguard the matzot" (Shemot 12:17). The Mechilta expounds: "Do not read it 'matzot' but 'mitzvot' (In Hebrew both words have the same letters). Just as one does not leave matzah dough to rise, so one should not neglect a mitzvah opportunity. If a mitzvah comes your way, perform it immediately." Asks Rabbi Shalom, why does the Torah specify this rule particularly in reference to this verse and not in any other place?

He replies: "Wonder of wonders! In order for a matzah to become chametz, it is not necessary to do any act with one's hands, it is enough just to leave the matzah alone. If dough that is made from water and flour is left to rest without doing anything to it, it will automatically rise.

Therefore, specifically on this verse the Torah alludes to this lesson and stresses: Do not forgo a mitzvah opportunity. Meaning, you should know that to spoil a mitzvah and lose it, it is not necessary to perform any negative act. If you don't stand guard over it, it will quickly get lost or ruined.

When a person recites the blessings after a meal, it is a time of closeness to Hashem. In the second blessing "We thank You", we are claiming something mighty. We are thanking Hashem for His covenant and His Torah! Chazal tell us, "One who does not recite the [section of] covenant and the Torah has not fulfilled his obligation [of grace after meals]." However, even if he does recite this section but his thoughts are elsewhere, he loses out big time! The sefer 'Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah' and other sefarim write that if one says the blessings but does not pay attention to what one is saying, even though one has mentioned the covenant and Torah, one loses the value of the mitzvah. Just through a lack of observation and appropriate concentration on the words one is reciting, one greatly minimizes the value of this blessing, which is a Torah obligation!

When a person wakes up in the morning he should think to himself: "Ah, I will soon merit laying tefillin!" But sometimes he wakes up and the first question that comes to his mind is, "What's the time? Maybe I can sleep for another five minutes..." Let us stop to think for a moment: How can he long to sleep? It's almost time to put on tefillin! Feel excited! The mitzvah of tefillin! Wait for it with anticipation!

"You shall observe My commandments and perform them". This, then, is the preparation required for mitzvot. If one merits 'observing' the commandments, then 'performance' will follow.



Pearls of the Parsha

Remaining Calm Even on a Fast Day

"They shall not make a bald spot on their heads, and they shall not shave an edge of their beard; and in their flesh they shall not cut a gash" (Vayikra 21:5)

Since Kohanim are short-tempered, explains Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim zy"l, the Ben Ish Chai, this verse comes to warn them about the trait of anger. Chazal say (Pesachim 66b), "One who becomes angry, if he is wise, his wisdom disappears". Where is wisdom found? In the head. Therefore, the Kohanim were warned: "They shall not make a bald spot on their heads", they should not become angry so as not to lose the wisdom they have in their heads.

It is common that on a fast day, even people who are generally calm become more easily agitated and provoked, therefore it is necessary to insert a special warning not to become angry on fast days.

This is alluded to in the above verse: The Hebrew word for beard is spelt zayin, kuf, nun. The letter preceding zayin is vav, the letter preceding kuf is tzadik and the letter mem precedes the nun. These letters, re-arranged, spell tzom, the Hebrew word for fast. The Torah says, "They shall not make a bald spot", Kohanim must not become angry so that they should not lose their wisdom as a result. And "...an edge of their beard" the side of the beard, referring to tzom, the letters that precede beard, "they shall not shave".

Above all, "in their flesh they shall not cut a gash", they must also protect their health and not grow angry.

Patience Always Pays Off

"The son of an Israelite woman went out" (Vayikra 24:10)

Rashi explains that the son of an Israelite woman went about in the camp scoffing about the show-bread: "A king normally eats warm, freshly baked bread. So why should Hashem have cold, nine-day old bread in the Tabernacle?"

The Ozneyim L'Torah expounds on the moral lesson this contains: A person is obligated to observe the mitzvot exactly according to the law, whether he understands their reason or not. A person must instill in his heart that when he doesn't understand some conduct of Hashem or one of the Torah commandments, it is only due to his limited perception. The fact that he finds something hard to comprehend will then have no effect on his performance.

The way the blasphemer behaved is a proof of this concept. He began by scoffing at the mitzvah of the show-bread since he was unable to understand it, and that confusion led to him later on pronouncing G-d's Name and blaspheming.

According to his perception, it was appropriate for a king to eat warm, fresh bread every day and not nine-day old, stale bread. But had he believed that "the judgements of Hashem are true, altogether righteous" and waited a week, he would have seen that the bread was still warm after eight days. He then would have been saved from this serious sin and its punishment.

Sanctification - Beginning or End?

"You shall sanctify him, for he offers the food of your G-d" (Vayikra 21:8)

The Maharam of Rotenberg points out that the phrase "you shall sanctify him", appears twice in the Torah. The first time is at Har Sinai "Bound the mountain and sanctify it" and the second time is in this week's Parsha, "You shall sanctify him [the Kohen], for he offers the food of your G-d".

Chazal explain that we sanctify the Kohen from the beginning, as his holiness is innate, without any work on his part – nor does it grow during his lifetime – and this is demonstrated by giving him the first aliyah of the Torah reading and honoring him first to recite the zimun. Therefore, when it says "you shall sanctify him" referring to the Kohen, it is written at the beginning of the verse. This is in contradistinction to the Talmid Chacham, whose level of holiness grows all his life, and therefore the "sanctify it" referring to the Giving of the Torah is written at the end of the verse, for the sanctification of a Talmid Chacham is best demonstrated at the end, as it says, "For the sake of the holy ones who are [interred] in the earth". It is only after his passing that his holiness is recognized, as it says, "Behold, He cannot have faith even in His holy beings".

Similarly, the honor of a Talmid Chacham is demonstrated at the end of the Torah reading, in accordance with the ruling "The greatest one rolls up [the Sefer Torah]".

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



Anger Makes One Lose One's Presence of Mind

"The son of an Israelite woman went out" (Vayikra 24:10)

Rashi writes: Where did he go out from? Rabbi Levi says that he left his share in the World to Come... And the Mishna says that the Beit Din of Moshe ruled against him. He came to pitch his tent in the camp of Dan but they said to him, 'What brings you here?' He replied, 'I am a descendant of Dan.' They said, 'It is written "each man by his banner according to the insignias of their father's household".' He went to the Beit Din of Moshe and they ruled against him, so he began blaspheming.

Rashi explains that he began debating with the tribe of Dan for he wished to pitch his tent in their portion since his Jewish mother, Shlomit bat Dibri, descended from the tribe of Dan. But the Danites told him that the Torah rules that inheritance goes according to the father and since his father was a non-Jew, he was not entitled to a portion in their inheritance. Since the son of the Israelite did not agree with this answer, he went to the court of Moshe where they ruled in favor of Dan. Out of great anger and rage with this ruling, he began blaspheming the Name of G-d.

This demonstrates the severity and danger of the trait of anger. One who becomes immersed in it loses his senses and displays a lack of self-control. As it says (Nedarim 22a), "One who becomes angry is seized by all kinds of Gehinom". This means that besides inheriting Gehinom in the Next World, the dangerous spirits that can be found in This World, messengers of Gehinom, will harm him. It is no secret that many have suffered nervous breakdowns, heart attacks, strokes and other maladies r"l, as a result of enormous rage.

In light of Rashi's words we can conclude that the blasphemer deteriorated to this low level of cursing G-d's Name, since he was overcome with such great rage. Besides this, he also renounced the truth and denied a reality that was well-known. Despite being aware of the enormous miracle that occurred with the show-bread, he scoffed at it, for as we explained, anger makes a person lose his senses and totally disrupts his rational mind.

It also seems possible to add that the tribe of Dan, on their part, did not act appropriately; they were too strict with him. One can say that had Dan been more accommodating with him and allowed him to pitch his tent in their portion, he would not have come to disgrace Hashem's Name and scoff at the show-bread. Since they dealt harshly with him, the severity of his act is also attributed to them, for had they received him nicely they could have prevented all the mockery and enormous anger that resulted.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



Educate Youngsters with Love

Chinuch Thoughts from the Great Roshei Yeshivot

If we turn our attention skyward and take a look at the stars, they appear as nothing more than tiny dots of light. But the truth is, stars are huge masses – some are even ten times larger than the Earth itself.

A Torah-based outlook compares teachers of young children to stars, as Chazal say (Baba Batra 8b): "Those who teach righteousness to the multitudes [will shine] like the stars, forever and ever" - this refers to those who instruct young children. This week's Parsha begins by referring to those who are entrusted with instructing the public, "Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them". Chazal point out an apparent redundancy in the verse. Why was it necessary to say "and tell them" after it has already said "say"? They answer that this teaches that the adult Kohanim were cautioned regarding the children.

The tzadik Rabbi Chaim Friedlander zt"l, Mashgiach of Ponivezh Yeshiva, raises the question of why those who teach young children are compared to stars.

He explains that despite the fact that when educators and teachers of young children fulfil their role, the importance and impact of what they are doing is not always felt, in truth, they are actually creating worlds. Teachers and parents earn tremendous merits for every talmid/child who grows up and follows the path that was instilled in him, for it is a clear result of their investment and care. If they were successful with his education, the success endures and continues to have an effect on all the following generations. The opposite is also true: A flawed education can result in deterioration for many generations to come.

Rabbi Eliezer Turk shlita, in his sefer 'Otzroteihem Amaleh', relates that HaGaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita used to learn

with his young sons every day, and even finished Shas with several of them before they reached Bar Mitzvah. When Rabbi Chaim was asked why he did this – for are young children capable of grasping complicated sugyot in Eiruv and Nidah? – he replied in his measured manner:

"I wanted to show them that finishing Shas is not something unattainable. This itself would encourage them and fill them with the aspiration to continue learning and completing masechtos."

This is the implication of the Chazal, "If there are no lambs there are no goats and if there are no goats there are no lambs". If we want our offspring to grow up with the correct outlook in life, we must instill in their pure souls, already from a young age, all the principles that are important to us. We must imprint the value of Torah in their hearts, the longing to grow in Torah and gather its treasures, even while they are still infants.

In a similar vein, the esteemed Admor of Kalev zt"l related that when he was in the Auschwitz concentration camp during the war, he met a young boy who was wandering around, constantly mumbling to himself. The Admor approached him and asked: "What are you constantly mumbling?" At first the boy recoiled in fright. All the prisoners were bald and lacked any sign of Jewishness on their faces. He had no idea who this being, who had picked on him, was, and what his intentions were.

But after the Admor identified himself the young boy answered: "I constantly repeat to myself the eternal verse 'Hear, O Israel: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem, the One and Only'. My mother hy"d would repeat this verse to me morning and night, from when I was still in the cradle. This is the only verse that I know by-heart and it accompanies me through all the difficulties that I am now experiencing in this terrible war."

Waves of Love

One of the vital principles in education, stresses HaRav Turk shlita, is love. Love is so essential because it forms a soul connection between the Rav and talmid and paves the way for the educator to make use of his gifts and professional tools.

Without this presence of love between Rav and talmid, the Rav is incapable of having an effect on the talmid's inner be-

ing. All he can do is make him do certain things, even if he possesses the most professional and successful educational tools. The opposite is also true: The more the Rav loves his talmid and forms a close relationship with him, treating him with affection, his chances of influencing him positively grow in proportion.

A distinguished Rosh yeshiva in Yerushalayim relates that when he established his Yeshiva Ketana, he approached the esteemed Admor of Slonim shlita, and asked to hear words of guidance.

The Admor told him the following: "My father, the 'Netivot Shalom' of Slonim zt"l would say that when a teacher or Maggid Shiur enters his class on the first day of the year and meets his talmidim for the first time, even before opening his mouth he is obligated to sit quietly for a moment, and gaze with loving, compassionate eyes at his dear talmidim who are sitting in the room, and try and fill his heart with sincere love for them. For it is only when he loves them that he can have a true influence on them. Love for one's talmidim is critical and essential for the entire relationship between Rav and talmid."

Rabbi Abish Eizen shlita relates that when he was a talmid in the Eitz Chaim Talmud Torah, he merited travelling several times, as part of an organized trip by the Talmud Torah, to Maran the Chazon Ish zt"l who tested them on their learning and blessed them. During those visits, he merited hearing the Chazon Ish speaking to the melamed and telling him approximately these words: "A melamed must know that if he greets every single talmid, when he arrives at the Talmud Torah in the morning, with a wide smile, the talmid on his part will return this gesture with two smiles and his whole day will run differently."

The Chazon Ish further instructed the melamed that the entire relationship between a Rav and his talmid, his measure of influence and soul-connection, depends on his pleasant countenance, his patience and demonstrations of love and affection that he shows to his talmid. This is the only way to succeed in opening his heart and having a far-reaching influence on him.